

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

Boise, Idaho

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News

Having been shopping for a new computer for some time, Micron Electronics got my business by packaging a good deal around an Intel Pentium 200 processor. It came with quite a few bells and whistles, so now I am moving stuff from my old PC. The old one is an Edge 386, the brand Micron used before they put their own name on their products. It served me well. Now it is due for a motherboard transplant and software upgrade so it can keep on working for the kids.

The new PC came with Microsoft Word; it seems easy to move all my WordPerfect files over. You will probably be able to detect some differences in the look of the newsletter as the fonts are slightly different and how graphics and illustrations are done has changed. I have installed Microsoft Access, which I use as a database with no problem. My first real add-on was a Hewlett-Packard PhotoSmart photo scanner. Since I have all of the Idaho token photographs in the form of 35mm black and white negatives, I was looking for something to scan them into the PC. It does that quite nicely, plus has the capability to scan in a 5 by 7-inch photo. I have even tried scanning tokens, postcards, etc. in directly. Hopefully you will be able to notice an improvement in quality of the illustrations. But for now, I am having a devil of a time getting illustrations incorporated correctly into a Word document at the place where I want them. I miss WordPerfect's "reveal codes" function which shows the hidden stuff which makes it all work. If anyone is an expert on these functions in Word, please get in touch with me.

Dean Rasmussen will be undertaking the whetstone cataloguing project. Please send him descriptions of your holdings. Dean has also planned a trip to the Salmon area to scout out what we can expect to see and do during our gathering on the weekend of July 18 & 19.

Cleaning tokens

One of the beauties of our hobby compared to coin collecting is that we can be very pleased to obtain a piece which is worn, damaged, or filthy. If a coin collector were to have the chance to pick up a coin in similar condition, they would probably pass. The law of supply and demand is the ruling factor in this difference. Based on the 1908 Salt Lake Stamp Company catalog as pictured on Frank Schell's Idaho Merchants' Tokens 1865 - 1967, a minimum order was 100 tokens of a given size. I have long felt that a typical order was between 100 and 500 with few varieties exceeding that amount. When only a few survive, we token collectors do not have the luxury of being choosy.

Coin collectors do not generally find it acceptable to clean coins; we are allowed that privilege oftentimes out of necessity. The effects of having been buried in the ground make for two of the worst problems we see. Missing aluminum is probably not fixable, but the white aluminum oxide left sure is unsightly. And ground-darkened brass makes for tokens which are hard to read and enjoy. I have tried several techniques with mixed results. I have used vinegar and salt, concentrated citrus cleaner, Naval Jelly (a disaster), boiling in water, etc. If anyone has solutions to remove the various kinds of crud found on tokens, please share them with the rest of us.

Clarence LaFay of New Meadows

The LaFay family was among the early settlers to come to central Idaho's scenic Meadows Valley. The head of the family, William H. LaFay, was born on November 9, 1860, and came to Idaho from Wisconsin in 1909. Of his 5 children, Edward, Clarence, Albert, Ethel, and Mabel, two sons Albert and Clarence took up barbering with him in the valley. Clarence was born January 11, 1889 at Rice Lake, WI; his brother Albert was born in 1891. William and Clarence ran a barbershop in rented quarters in Meadows until 1911. The Weiser American of March 30, 1911 noted that "Messrs LaFay have purchased ground for the erection of a building for an up-to-date barbershop, the fittings of which Clarence bought at Spokane last week." Later that year Clarence moved the old Mort Jones Saloon building [complete with Brunswick-Balke-Collender backbar] from Meadows to the new Pacific & Idaho Northern Railroad terminus town of New Meadows. There he shared the building on Main Street with I. N. Ripper's billiard hall, cigar store and soft drink parlor.

In 1913 William and Albert LaFay relocated to McCall where they were partners in a barbershop. William died on January 12, 1914 after suffering a heart attack while ice skating on Payette Lake. Bert continued barbering in McCall, pursuing his interests in boxing, baseball, and fiddling. He was killed in an automobile accident in 1946.

Clarence LaFay followed many interests during his career. He ranched, had a partnership in what is now Zim's hot springs resort, owned a theatre, and barbered. He purchased Ripper's billiard parlor in the 1920s. At that time he ordered the trade tokens we know. They are all holed as made and the aluminum 5¢ tokens are readily distinguishable from the brass 12½¢ ones.

In 1937 Clarence's son "Bud" started working in the barbershop while he was still in high school. When Clarence died on February 26, 1955, Bud took over the business, phasing out all but the barbering part. Bud's son Miles LaFay learned the business also and moved to Lewiston to open LaFay's Razor Cut there, continuing a four-generation tradition.



NEME-2

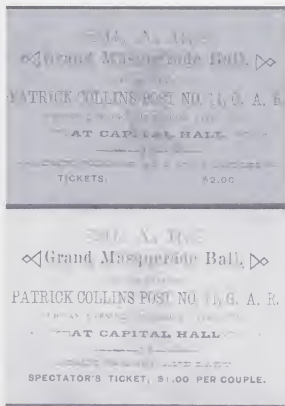
NEME-2(A)

Except for the (B) variety, these tokens are fairly common. I know of about 8 each of NEME-2 and -2(A) in collections and a quantity of each in a hoard. Only one example of the -2(B) variety has surfaced, and it is well worn, so its differences are hard to detect. It has the same reverse as the -2(A) variety. The obverse difference between the two 12½¢ brass varieties is seen in the "S" after LaFAY: on the -2(A) token the apostrophe is almost invisible and the S is smaller than the first "A" in LaFAY and it has a poor strike on the lower loop. The 'S' almost fills the whole space between LaFAY and HALL, whereas on the -2(B) token there doesn't appear to be an apostrophe, the S is well-struck and about the same size as the first "A" in LaFAY and there is a space between LaFAY and HALL. Examine your collections and if you have a nice NEME-2(B), I would like to borrow it to photograph.

Grand Army of the Republic

The Grand Army of the Republic was the fraternal association of Union veterans of the Civil War. In that one had to be a veteran of that conflict to be a member, the GAR itself died a slow death. The Idaho Department was officially closed on July 28, 1946 when Israel Broadsword of Samuels, Idaho, the last of the Idaho Civil War veterans, could no longer carry out his duties as Commander of the organization.

After illustrating the meal ticket from the Emmett post of the GAR a few issues ago, I was asked about other posts in the state. I have been able to compile this (incomplete) list from information in three different rosters. As can be seen from the numbers, several posts were closed prior to the earliest list I found, that of 1908. Any help filling in the missing numbers would be appreciated.



R. B. Hayes Post No. 2, Lewiston
McPherson Post No. 3, Salmon
Phil Sheridan Post No. 4, Boise
Major Anderson Post No. 5, Moscow
E. D. Baker Post No. 6, Hailey
George H. Thomas Post No. 9, Blackfoot
Canby Post No. 11, Murray
Geo. A. Custer Post No. 14, Pocatello
A. T. McReynolds Post No. 19, Coeur d'Alene
Hugh Wilson Post No. 21, Caldwell
Fremont Post No. 23, Emmett
Lyon Post No. 24, Genesee
McConville Post No. 26, Weiser
G. A. Hobart Post No. 27, Nampa
Hancock Post No. 28, Grangeville
Lawton Post No. 28, Rathdrum
Sherman Post No. 31, Payette
U. S. Grant Post No. 32, Sandpoint
Dan McCook Post No. 33, Twin Falls
Hooker Post No. 34, Idaho Falls

This last post from Idaho Falls was added after 1908. And, interestingly, I have tickets dated

1886 from Patrick Collins Post No. 11 of Boise [they are rubber stamped on the back with "William H. Nye, Boise City, Idaho." I also have an 1887 program from the same post, but it is Post No. 4 by then. Perhaps the 11 was an error? Or there was a renumbering as well as renaming. There are two varieties of the tickets, leading to interesting speculation as to the difference between a "Regular" ticket admitting bearer and two ladies and a "Spectator" ticket admitting bearer and one lady.

Another e-mail plug

If you have e-mail, send a message to one of the readers of this newsletter who are using it. Then we'll see to it that you get added to our informal distribution list. Robert Higdem and Greg Manos have found some e-mail bid sales on the Internet, so there are some possibilities for adding to your collection in that way. Computer & modem but no e-mail? There are free e-mail services out there. Ask rhigdem@micron.net, Tokengreg@aol.com, or jmutch@juno.com.

Dahlberg Radio tokens

In the "olden days" before television, radio was the medium providing entertainment and up to the minute information. Stations first appeared in Idaho in the 1920s with low power broadcasts to a small number of hobbyists with primitive receivers. As the technology improved, radios became household fixtures. They evolved from crystal or battery sets handmade from individual components to sophisticated, easily-operated devices housed in beautiful furniture cabinets. A growing awareness of the rest of the world, spurred on by European crises and finally World War II popularized shortwave bands on home radios so listeners could get news from around the globe. Advances in electronics allowed radios to become smaller, better, and cheaper; this coupled with new bakelite and plastic cabinet materials often put several radios in many homes.

At about the peak of tube radio technology in the mid 1950s, just before transistors started replacing tubes, the Dahlberg Company of Minneapolis found a niche market by combining a more-or-less standard AM radio receiver with a coin-operated timing device. The radio was different in that it was made into a cabinet which could fasten to the headboard of a bed so it didn't take up room on a nightstand and had a remote speaker which could be placed close to the listener. Their "Pillow Speaker Radio" was ideally suited for the hotel market, and was placed in many rooms to make a little more money from the traveling public by charging for in-room entertainment. This tactic and similar ones (vibrating chairs and beds, etc.) was soon changed as free radios and later, televisions, were seen as a competitive advantage.



Soon the Dahlberg Company found they could expand their market by placing their radios in hospitals where patients could use the set without disturbing other patients. Dahlberg's proposition to the hospitals was that they would place their radios beside every bed, the hospital would supply the electricity, and the patient would pay a fee for each hour of radio time. Most of the fee went to Dahlberg, but the hospitals usually got a commission. The modification of the coin operating mechanism to accept only tokens in the hospital application was a security measure; if cash were used, it might be left out in sight and could be stolen if the patient fell asleep. Since tokens could only be used in the radios, sticky-fingered visitors or staff would seldom be tempted to take them.

There are only four known varieties of Dahlberg tokens from Idaho, all having a common "stock" reverse: RADIO / TOKEN / Dahlberg, and all are 17mm Rd(ch) Zn. Why zinc was used this long after the wartime brass shortages is unknown. Unfortunately, these small tokens are probably the worst examples I could select to show off the

ability of my scanner as the zinc has little contrast and the ones I have photographed are worn. Four Idaho hospitals are known to have used Dahlberg radio tokens:

- COT-3 OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION / HOSPITAL / COTTONWOOD, / IDAHO (8 known)
- IDF-75 SACRED HEART HOSPITAL / IDAHO FALLS, / IDAHO (2 known)
- P-57 BANNOCK MEMORIAL / HOSPITAL / POCATELLO, / IDAHO (2 known)
- P-66 ST. ANTHONY MERCY / HOSPITAL / POCATELLO, IDAHO (5 known)

Salt Lake Stamp Company Catalog

Do any of you have a copy of the 1908 Salt Lake Stamp Company catalog as pictured on the front of Frank Schell's Idaho Merchants' Tokens 1865 - 1967? Or any other year, for that matter. It shows some tokens which have never surfaced, at least in the exact form pictured. They are IONA MERC. CO., LTD. / IDAHO / ELVA BRANCH in presumably 10¢ and 50¢ denominations, and HOLT'S BAKERY / BOISE, / IDAHO. Other types and businesses are shown, but many are covered by actual token photos and the price of the booklet. There have been other varieties surface from the Iona Merc. and from the Saville Cigar Store in Salt Lake, so I presume they filled orders from Holt's Bakery. I have never found a directory listing from this particular business, though.

Somewhere I have a water-damaged catalog from the Salt Lake Stamp Co. from the 1950s, but it doesn't illustrate any of their products. The company is still in business, but I understand they have some ill feelings toward token collectors after a bad experience with one some time ago. It would be nice to see and publish records of some of their orders if they are still available. Anyone know? Likewise for other token makers.

Joe's Place



From the Idaho Statesman of February 18, 1982 is the obituary of Joe C. Aguirre who died in a Boise hospital the previous day. He was born July 13, 1923 in Mountain Home where he received his education

before serving in the U. S. Navy for four years. Coming back to Idaho after the War, he married Rita Carroll. They owned and operated Joe's Club and Restaurant until retiring in 1978. Joe was active in the American Legion [he served as commander of the Mountain Home Post] and Society of the Forty and Eight.

Joe's Club tokens are pretty common in 25¢ 29mm Rd Br and 5¢ 22mm Rd Br, but I only know of 4 examples of the 5¢ 21mm Rd Al one. They all are of a newer style which generally serves to date tokens into the early 1950s.

From Ron Haberman

"I am originally from North Dakota, and I migrated from there when I was 18 years old. I only go back there for weddings and funerals, and never in the winter time. I much prefer the mild winters we have here in Southern Idaho at Boise.

"I guess I have been a collector all my life and only in the last 20 years or so that I worked at it. I started out collecting coins. Morgan silver dollars had a fascination to me and they still do. I spent many years putting together a set of CC Silver dollars in EF condition. It was not an easy thing to do as I wanted to see each coin before I bought it. Eventually I became disillusioned with coins and one day Hollis Pincock mentioned trade tokens as a possible alternative. He showed me part of his collection and once again I was hooked.

"Like many of you, I decided that I would stay with Idaho trade tokens. Over the years I have put together a nice collection of tokens. Some may be very rare as I was lucky at times to find them. For years I pursued token collecting with a vigor, now days I still look for them but not as hard. I find that I come across tokens when I am sometimes not looking for them. It is always good to be aware of what is around you, for many tokens are still out there; they have just not been found yet.

"I have enjoyed meeting many of the other collectors around the state. The most unusual person I was to meet was John Gold, a man who had great enthusiasm for life. I only knew John for a few years, but I will always remember him. He had the greatest gift of life I have ever known."

Greg Manos' new personal tokens

"I received my new shipment of plastic tokens dated 1998. You might want to put the e-mail address of Joel Reznick (frog pond collectibles) who makes the tokens in the newsletter. That way we can get more Idaho tokens to collect! His e-mail address is: TheRibet@aol.com

"They cost from 15 to 21 cents each (depending on size and quantity ordered). I will bring a set (4 different again) to everyone at the meeting (or sooner if I see you)."

Greg uses these attractive pieces as business cards—you may want to consider that as well.

Best regards,

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